

MEMORANDUM

State of Alaska

Department of Transportation & Public Facilities

TO: Eric Taylor
Project Manager

DATE: January 16, 2008

TELEPHONE NO: 451-2381

FAX NO: 451-2313

FROM: Steve Titus, P.E.
Regional Director
Northern Region



SUBJECT: 2030 Let's Get Moving Comments

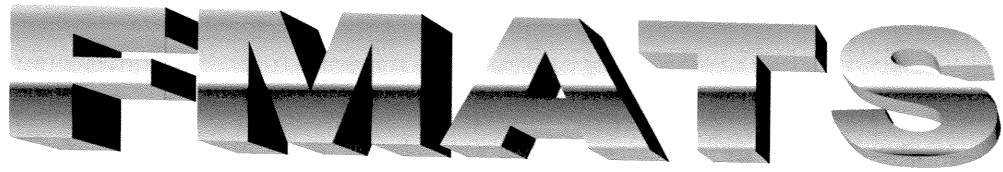
Attached are the official comments from the FMATS Policy Committee on the 2030 Let's Get Moving Alaska Statewide Long-Range Transportation Policy Plan Update.

Additionally: The plan should reference the Alaska Railroad southern rail realignment project. This is an alternative in the existing Fairbanks-North Pole Rail Realignment Project. Attached are the following documents that reference the Fairbanks-North Pole Rail Realignment Project:

1. Fairbanks-North Pole Rail Realignment, Project Facts written by the Alaska Railroad Corporation;
2. City of Fairbanks Resolution of support, Resolution No. 4232, As Amended;
3. Fairbanks North Star Borough Resolution authorizing MOU to be signed, Resolution No. 2007-18;
4. Fairbanks North Star Borough Resolution of support of Phase 1, Resolution No. 2007-19;
5. Fairbanks North Star Borough Resolution of support of removing rail crossings in the FNSB, Resolution No. 2007-26; and
6. Memorandum of Understanding # Fairbanks North Star Borough, Alaska Railroad Corporation, June 25, 2007.

cc: Ethan Birkholz, Manager, Northern Region Planning
Gerald Rafson, Chief, Northern Region Planning
Jeff Ottesen, DOT&PF, Director, Division of Program Development
Ron King, Chief, Surface Transportation Programs, Division of Program Development

**FAIRBANKS
METROPOLITAN
AREA
TRANSPORTATION
SYSTEM**



January 16, 2008

POLICY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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Eric Taylor, Project Manager
State of Alaska, DOT&PF
3132 Channel Drive
Juneau, AK 99811-2500

Re: 2030 Let's Get Moving Comments:

Dear Mr. Taylor:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Alaska Statewide Long-Range Transportation Policy Plan update. Our comments follow:

Overall: The FMATS Policy Committee felt that there is little mention of Fairbanks area issues in any part of the plan. This plan leads readers to believe the only transportation problems are in the Anchorage Bowl to Matanuska Valley area. The conclusion drawn is that issues in other parts of Alaska are not worth including.

1. Page 3: Paragraph 1 add the following (in *italicized* text):

And non-metropolitan areas, especially by government investment in infrastructure that will stimulate private investment.

2. Page 3: Under State Mandate, 1st paragraph add the following (in *italicized* text):

transportation plan for the state. Congressional legislation requires the formation of an MPO for the urbanized areas and the Intermodal Surface Transportation Act requires state transportation officials to consult with local boards on matters of project prioritization and decision making.

3. Page 18: Addressing demand-driven urban capacity should include Fairbanks area issues. Northeast Fairbanks retail growth area. What about rail realignment around Fairbanks, discussion needs to include the rail component?

4. Page 18: Consideration of congestion should not be limited to the Anchorage/Wasilla areas. In Fairbanks movements that fail in the peak hours, i.e., one or more movements experience LOS are:

- Airport Way/Steese Expy/Richardson Hwy/Gaffney Road
- Steese Expy./3rd Street
- Steese Expy./Trainor Gate Road
- Steese Expy./Johansen Expy.
- College Rd./Illinois Street
- Geist Rd./University Ave.

In addition, there are numerous public complaints about the following three intersections.

- Geist Rd./ SE Ramp/Parks Hwy.
- Geist Rd./ WR Ramp/Parks Hwy.
- Chena Pump Rd/Dartmouth Rd.

The left turns are currently permissive only and through traffic volumes are heavy enough on Geist Road and Chena Pump that left turners have to wait multiple signal cycles in order to turn left.

5. Page 26: Fairbanks issues are downplayed (“to a lesser extent in Fairbanks and smaller communities”) when discussing demand-driven capacity to accommodate growth.
6. Page 32-35: Under **Strategy 4: Increase Revenues** add the following action (in *italicized* text):

Action 4.x. Establish funding in general state operating budget for public and community transportation providers statewide.

Alaska is the only state in the union that does not provide general operating support for transit service. Public and Community transit programs provide transportation for thousands of Alaskans to go to work, to school and to medical appointments. Many of our passengers could not fully participate in the community without bus service. This is not just a function of local taxpayers; all Alaskans benefit by reducing traffic on Alaska's roads and highways and increasing the air quality standards statewide. It is not solely the role of local government to pay for public transportation; that a partnership between AKDOT&PF and community and public transportation providers is long overdue and will benefit all road users around the state.

These funds would be used by community and public transportation providers to match federal funds.

7. Page 41: Correct numbers for **Fairbanks vehicles: 12 buses & 8 vans.**

8. Page 42: Discussion of expanding transit systems should not be limited to Anchorage. Transit systems are needed statewide to reduce the reliance on driving/commuting in single occupant vehicles. There is no discussion of the need for developing alternatives in Fairbanks. Expansion of systems in Fairbanks should be considered to accommodate future growth and air quality. The Fairbanks North Star Borough MACS transit system is studying expanding routes to Farmers Loop Road and Eielson AFB.

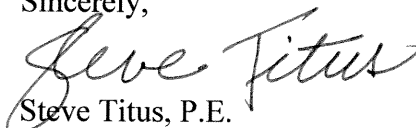
9. Page 43; add the following (in *italicized* text):

Transportation plans for Alaska have always had to balance the fact that the majority of Alaska's population is concentrated in the urban areas, yet there is a rural population with mobility needs dispersed over a vast area. *Support for rural transit systems, which tie into urban transit systems, is critical to meet the employment, medical and quality of life needs of rural populations.* (FNSB)

10. Page 64: The overall plan lacks a conclusion. The preliminary draft plan ends abruptly with aviation needs (pg. 65). Recommend adding a wrap-up of the main concepts of the plan and a brief explanation of the next step in the process (i.e., update the STIP).

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Steve Titus, P.E.
Chair, Policy Committee



Fairbanks-North Pole Rail Realignment

PROJECT FACTS

Project Scope

The Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) proposes to optimize the alignment of mainline and branch track within the Fairbanks - North Pole area to improve safety, customer response, and minimize transportation conflicts with the adjacent communities. The project corridor extends from the northwest side of Fairbanks near Sheep Creek to the southeast side of North Pole near Moose Creek.

The project also seeks to determine possible passenger transit services for the communities along the route. The City of Fairbanks is served by the mainline track from ARRC milepost 465 (northwest of the University of Alaska Fairbanks) to the mainline terminus at MP 470, as well as a spur to the airport. The 29-mile Eielson Branch, which begins where the mainline ends, serves Ft. Wainwright, Eielson AFB and North Pole, where the Flint Hills petroleum refinery is located.

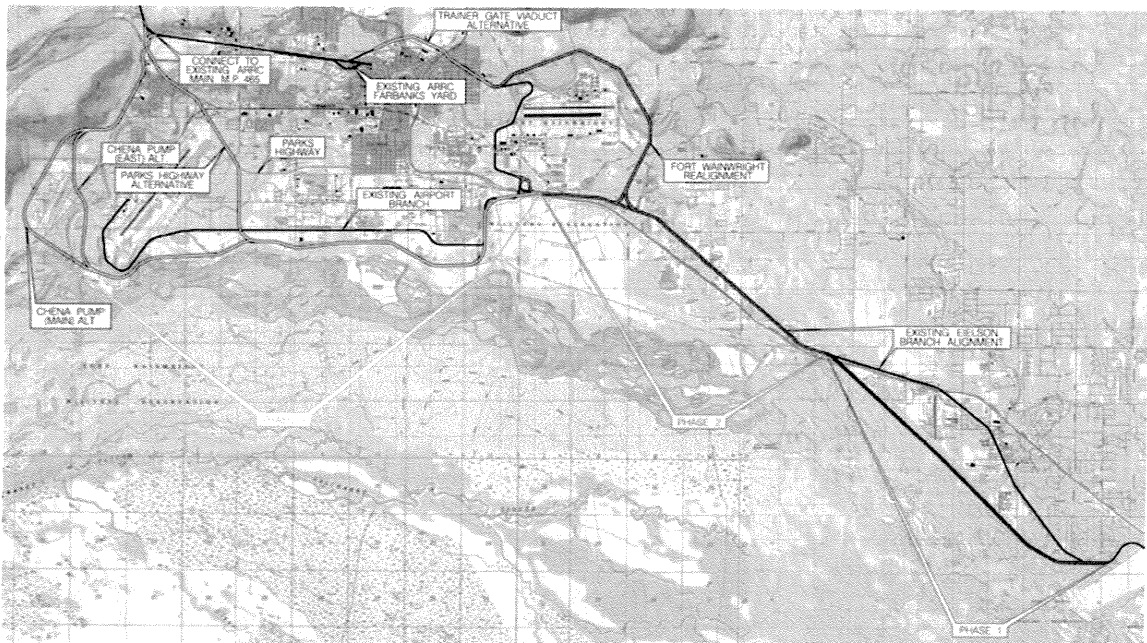
In early 2007, the corridor realignment effort was renamed the Fairbanks - North Pole Rail Realignment (F-NPR). It stems from reconnaissance and engineering studies since 2000 that have

investigated alternatives for rail realignment through the Fairbanks - North Pole area.

The overall size and cost of the F-NPR is considerable, requiring the engineering, funding and construction be accomplished in phases.

Phase 1 stretches from Richardson Highway MP 9 to the southeast side of North Pole, near Moose Creek. Clearly the least complex from financial and engineering standpoints, Phase 1 offers substantial safety benefits and the possibility for public transit. The NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process for the first phase can be expedited by relying on engineering and environmental studies conducted to date.

Phase 2 stretches from MP 9 on the Richardson Hwy (vicinity of Peridot Street), northwest to 3-Mile Gate, on the west border of Fort Wainwright. Phase 3 encompasses the area west of 3-Mile Gate, past the Chena River. While pursuing Phase 1 as the first priority, ARRC will simultaneously continue the alternative analysis engineering study efforts for the second and third phases as funding allows.



Purpose and Need

The purpose of Fairbanks-North Pole Rail Realignment Project is to: 1) enhance the safety of rail/roadway crossings, railroad operations, and pedestrian activities within urban/suburban Fairbanks and along the Eielson Branch; 2) reduce travel times and improve operational efficiency; and 3) accommodate mass transit/passenger service. Objectives are to construct a straighter railroad track alignment, reduce the number of at-grade (same elevation) roadway crossings, and establish a rail-based passenger system in the Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB).

Enhance Safety: There are dozens of at-grade road crossings within Fairbanks and along the Eielson Branch. Fewer at-grade crossings would decrease the inherent safety concerns, including the potential for accidents between trains and vehicular traffic. It would also reduce roadway traffic delays, including delays to emergency response vehicles.

Sharp curves on the track increase the likelihood of train derailments, while straighter track reduces the risk. In the Fairbanks Area, there are dozens of curves ranging from 1 degree (°) to 14°, and 9 curves sharper than 6°. The desired degree of curvature is between 1° to 3°, preferably less than 2°. The proposed project would straighten sharp curves along the majority of the route to less than 3°.

Currently, the track passes near four schools: Ladd Elementary and Tanana Middle schools on Trainor Gate Road in Fairbanks, and the North Pole High School and Middle schools accessible from the Old Richardson Highway. In North Pole, popular restaurants that are frequented by students are on the opposite side of the railroad tracks. The project would realign the track away from the Old Richardson Highway in North Pole, eliminating community crossing conflicts.

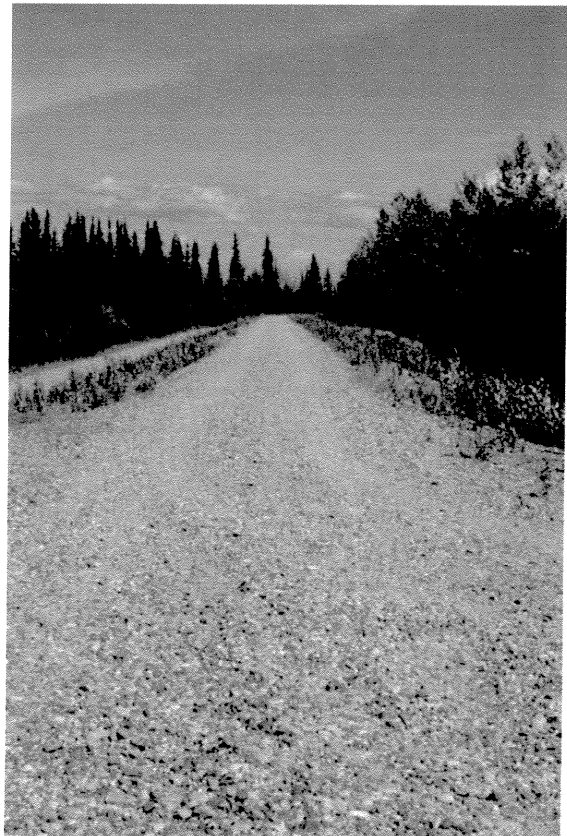
Operational Efficiency: Existing track curvature limits train speed to 10-20 mph, resulting in long travel times and high operating costs (labor, fuel, etc.). Curve straightening, track rehabilitation and modern track design would allow for train speeds of 45 to 79 mph, significantly cutting travel time through Fairbanks and between Fairbanks and North Pole. Reduced travel time would lower fuel and labor costs, thus improving ARRC's operating efficiency.

Sharp curves translate to substantially higher maintenance costs due to accelerated wear in railcar wheels, the rail, and the ties, and a breakdown of the track ballast. As a public corporation, ARRC has a fiduciary responsibility to spend wisely and efficiently.

As operating and maintenance costs decrease, more funds are available to address the railroad's other critical infrastructure needs and provide better services to its customers.

Passenger Transit / Passenger Service: Current modes of transportation between Fairbanks and North Pole are personal vehicles and limited bus service. Transportation by train is not viable due to the slow travel time. The project would allow for faster train speeds and reduced travel times, supporting mass transit/passenger services. There is some potential for rail ridership given the location of the Eielson Branch, service to North Pole, Fort Wainwright, University of Alaska Fairbanks, and the commercial district of Fairbanks, linking employment and shopping centers.

Passenger transit service would be particularly important in the winter. Much of the FNSB lies within an air quality maintenance area due to carbon monoxide (CO) emissions from motor vehicles that increase in low winter temperatures. The winter



The Tanana River Levee may provide an ideal "bed" for railroad tracks to relocate away from more congested areas of the City of North Pole.



driving environment frequently includes blowing snow, black ice and other cold-weather conditions that render the roadway slick and dangerous. Passenger rail service would provide a safer transportation alternative during the winter, which lasts 5-6 months in Alaska's interior.

ARRC constructed a new intermodal passenger depot that opened in Fairbanks in 2005. It is a key link in developing passenger rail service between Interior Alaska communities. The Alaska Railroad has also initiated an aggressive program of track projects between Denali National Park and North Pole (140 rail miles). These investments make rail transit services a more viable option in the future.

Status

- Reconnaissance level engineering and phasing studies were completed in 2001 and 2002. These studies considered the feasibility of realignment outside of the more populated areas of Fairbanks and North Pole and offered opportunities for public comment.
- With funding from the Department of Defense (DOD), ARRC worked on preliminary design and planning for an Eielson Branch Rail Realignment (EBRR) Environmental Assessment (EA) in 2005 and 2006.
- In Summer 2006, the Railroad initiated additional action to address a rail realignment outside of the more congested areas of Fairbanks. Called the South Fairbanks Rail Realignment, the effort renewed public involvement activities and extended some preliminary engineering of alternatives identified in previous reconnaissance studies.
- In December 2006, the Fort Wainwright component of the EBRR EA project was determined to have independent utility. Because of its benefit to the military, DOD funds were redirected to Fort Wainwright.
- In early 2007 the South Fairbanks and Eielson Branch realignment efforts were combined into the Fairbanks Area Rail Realignment (FARR) project. The FARR project was renamed Fairbanks-North Pole Rail Realignment in March 2007.
- Throughout spring 2007 the Alaska Railroad worked closely with the FNSB mayor and assembly

to formulate a memorandum of understanding that outlines how ARRC and FNSB will proceed jointly to support the Fort Wainwright Bypass and subsequent phases of the F-NPR project. A draft MOU and accompanying assembly resolution were discussed during April and May assembly meetings; approval is pending as of May 31, 2007.

- To support federal agency funding requirements and prepare for possible implementation of rail transit services, ARRC commissioned a commuter rail study of the area between Denali and North Pole. Wilbur Smith & Associates, San Francisco, was awarded the contract (The company completed a similar study for commuter rail service in Southcentral Alaska in 2001). Study efforts began in June 2007, with completion anticipated by spring 2008.

Project Costs & Funding

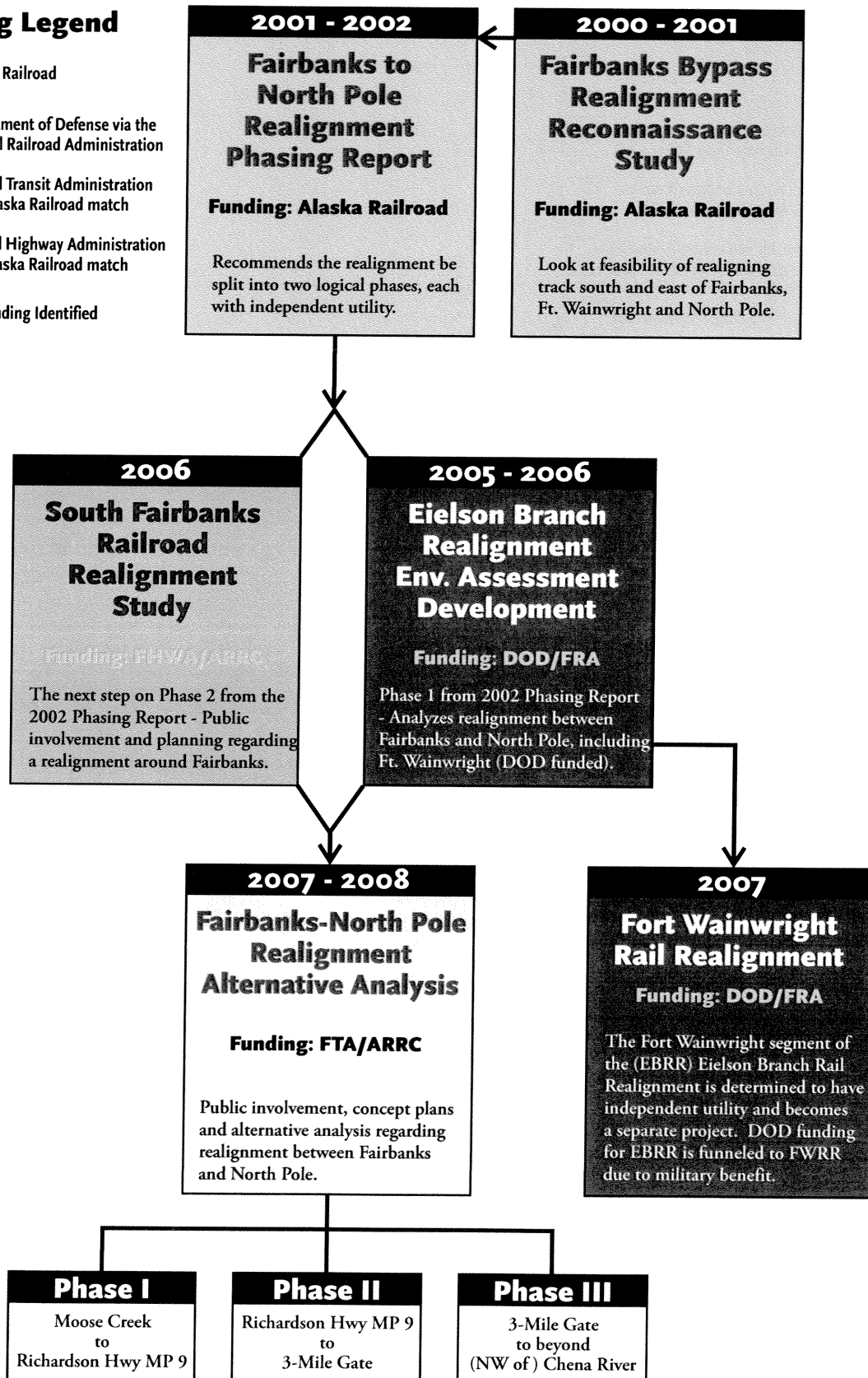
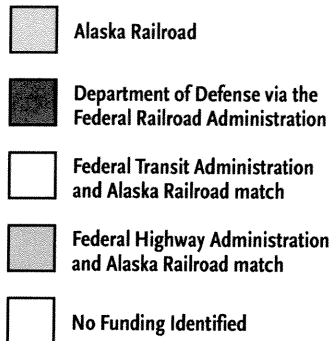
- \$200,000 in initial funding to accomplish preliminary engineering was provided 91% by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) with a 9% match from the Alaska Railroad. Remaining funds from this money are used to pursue Alternative Analysis work for the F-NPR project. \$200,000 was budgeted for 2007, funded by FHWA and ARRC match.
- The EBRR EA was estimated to cost \$1.5 million and was funded through a DOD 2005 appropriation administered as a grant through the Federal Railroad Administration. \$2 million in additional DOD funding was appropriated in 2006. While DOD funds are used for the Fort Wainwright environmental document, work accomplished on the EBRR EA benefits the F-NPR project.
- The *North End Rail Public Transportation Study & Operation Plan* is estimated to cost \$250,000. Funding is by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).
- Project cost range for design and construction of F-NPR realignment efforts are estimated to substantially exceed one hundred million dollars. Funding for preliminary engineering, environmental documentation, final design and construction has not been identified. Segmentation and phasing will be required to facilitate funding.

Role of Previous Studies on current projects:

1) Fairbanks-North Pole Rail Realignment

2) Fort Wainwright Rail Realignment

Funding Legend



Introduced by: Mayor Thompson
Date: August 21, 2006

RESOLUTION NO. 4232, As Amended

**A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING REALIGNMENT OF THE ALASKA
RAILROAD AND URGING FULL CONSIDERATION OF THE
SOUTHERN BYPASS OPTION TO MEET THE COMMUNITY'S RAIL
CONCERNS**

WHEREAS, the City of Fairbanks fully supports realignment of the Alaska Railroad between the Cities of Fairbanks and North Pole; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Railroad is currently considering the Eielson Branch realignment project including track realignment down Trainor Gate Road, with new tracks around the northern and eastern perimeter of Fort Wainwright; and

WHEREAS, the City of Fairbanks supports selection of an alternative that will provide the best comprehensive solution to community needs and concerns over:

- Safety in all areas of the community
- Traffic congestion and delays, especially in the northeast area of Fairbanks
- Elimination of dangerous "at-grade" crossings
- Improved service to Fort Wainwright
- Service to EAFB and beyond (Delta / Canada)
- Industrial rail development activity
- Neighborhood quality of life
- School bus and school safety; and

WHEREAS, in 2004 the Cities of North Pole and Fairbanks, and the Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly passed resolutions in support of Phase 1 and Phase 2 of construction of rail realignment that would eliminate 76 "at grade" crossings between Fairbanks and North Pole; and

WHEREAS, the Fairbanks to North Pole Southern Bypass crosses the Chena River using an existing transportation corridor at a location where bridges have been previously located, while the Eielson Branch Realignment route crosses land that is currently undisturbed and potentially creates two new bridges across the Chena River at presently undisturbed locations; and

WHEREAS, the NEPA Environmental Assessment process requires identification and evaluation of all alternatives to a major rail realignment project.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fairbanks City Council supports a full and complete evaluation of the Fairbanks to North Pole Southern Bypass for the Eielson Branch Realignment.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Fairbanks City Council urges the Alaska Railroad to include the Fairbanks to North Pole Southern Bypass as a formal alternative for evaluation and public comment during the Environmental Assessment for the Eielson Branch Realignment.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City of Fairbanks commits to work with the City of North Pole, the Fairbanks North Star Borough, Fort Wainwright, the Alaska Railroad, and the Alaska Department of Transportation on selection and funding of a realignment solution that best meets the needs of the entire community.

Dated this 11th day of SEPT., 2006.


STEVE M. THOMPSON, MAYOR

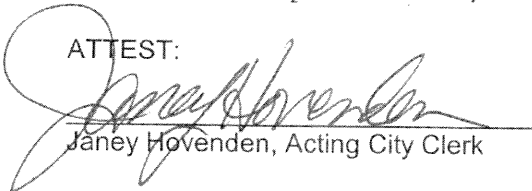
AYES: Cleworth, Seeliger, Hilling, Brown, Thies

NAYS:


ABSENT: Eberhart

APPROVED: September 11, 2006

ATTEST:


Janey Hovenden, Acting City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


HERBERT P. KUSS, City Attorney

By: Jim Whitaker, Mayor
Introduced: 06/20/07
Amended: 06/20/07
Adopted: 06/20/07

FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH

RESOLUTION NO. 2007 – 18

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING TO BE
SIGNED BETWEEN THE FNSB AND THE ALASKA RAILROAD OUTLINING A
COOPERATIVE EFFORT ON RAIL REALIGNMENT AROUND THE FAIRBANKS AND
NORTH POLE COMMUNITIES

WHEREAS, the Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) administration has
reached agreement with the Alaska Railroad Corporation on a framework to remove rail
traffic from the core areas of the community; and

WHEREAS, this agreement is contained in a Memorandum of Understanding
(MOU) dated April 26, 2007; and

WHEREAS, FNSB Code 2.08.080(B) requires that "an agreement with another
government entity or agency on a matter of legislative policy is subjected to assembly
approval."

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Assembly of the Fairbanks North
Star Borough that the Borough Mayor is authorized to enter into the above referenced
MOU with the Alaska Railroad.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution shall be sent to the
Governor Sarah Palin, the Honorable Senator Ted Stevens, the Honorable Lisa
Murkowski, the Honorable Congressman Don Young, Secretary of the Army, Lieutenant
Colonel Ronald M. Johnson, Post Commander, Fort Wainwright Army Post, the Alaska
Interior Delegation, the Alaska Railroad Board of Directors, the Federal Railroad
Administration, Mayor Steve Thompson, City of Fairbanks, Mayor Doug Isaacson, City
of North Pole, Dr. Anne Shortt, Superintendent, Fairbanks North Star Borough School
District, the Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce and the Fairbanks Daily News
Miner.

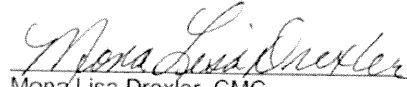
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PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 20th DAY OF JUNE 2007.



Luke Hopkins
Presiding Officer

ATTEST:



Mona Lisa Drexler, CMC
Municipal Borough Clerk

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46 Ayes: Frank, Foote, Winters, Musick, Rex, Hopkins

47 Noes: Therrien, Bartos, Beck

48

By: Jim Whitaker, Mayor
Introduced: 06/20/07
Amended: 06/20/07
Adopted: 06/20/07

FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH

RESOLUTION NO. 2007 - 19

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE FAIRBANKS-NORTH POLE RAIL
REALIGNMENT (F-NPR), IDENTIFYING THE SECTION OF THE PROJECT
BETWEEN MOOSE CREEK AND NINE MILE RICHARDSON HIGHWAY AS PHASE 1

WHEREAS, the Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) fully supports realignment of the Alaska Railroad improving track in, around and between the Cities of Fairbanks and North Pole to enhance safety, eliminate at-grade rail crossings, decrease traffic congestion, and to move rail traffic away from the more populated areas of the community; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) and the FNSB have agreed this realignment effort along the flood control levee will be pursued jointly as the Fairbanks – North Pole Rail Realignment (F-NPR); and

WHEREAS, the Fort Wainwright Rail Realignment is a proposed interim solution to the needs of the Fort Wainwright community until such time as the F-NPR is completed and the removal of rail traffic from the core areas of the community can be accomplished; and

WHEREAS, the ARRC will continue the alternative analysis engineering study for the F-NPR project as necessary to establish feasible route alternatives and costs; and

WHEREAS, the overall size, cost, and complexity of the F-NPR is considerable and almost certainly will be accomplished in phases; and

WHEREAS, the segment of the F-NPR between the Richardson Highway Mile Post 9 via the Tanana River levee reconnecting to the existing Alaska Railroad alignment at approximately Moose Creek (Phase 1) is clearly the least complex from both a financial and engineering point of view; and

WHEREAS, the FNSB supports the evaluation of rail public transit between the City of North Pole, Fort Wainwright, downtown Fairbanks, and the University of Alaska; and

46 WHEREAS, the FNSB supports the completion of the necessary environmental
47 documentation seeking approval from an appropriate lead federal agency to construct
48 the rail realignment described above;

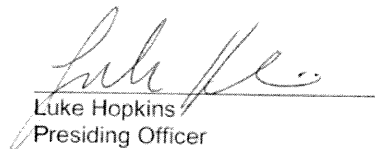
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50 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the FNSB fully supports the rail
51 realignment from Phase 1 as the first phase of the Fairbanks – North Pole Rail
52 Realignment; and

53
54 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the FNSB desires a partnering approach with
55 the Alaska Railroad where all stakeholders aggressively seek state and federal
56 appropriations for the NEPA process and for construction of Phase 1 described above
57 as soon as practicable; and


58
59 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the ARR will continue the overall engineering
60 effort furthering the F-NPR and the removal of rail traffic from the core areas of the
61 community.

62
63 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution shall be sent to the
64 Governor Sarah Palin, the Honorable Senator Ted Stevens, the Honorable Lisa
65 Murkowski, the Honorable Congressman Don Young, Secretary of the Army, Lieutenant
66 Colonel Ronald M. Johnson, Post Commander, Fort Wainwright Army Post, the Alaska
67 Interior Delegation, the Alaska Railroad Board of Directors, the Federal Railroad
68 Administration, Mayor Steve Thompson, City of Fairbanks, Mayor Doug Isaacson, City
69 of North Pole, Dr. Anne Shortt, Superintendent, Fairbanks North Star Borough School
70 District, the Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce and the Fairbanks Daily News
71 Miner.

72
73 PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 20th DAY OF JUNE 2007.


Luke Hopkins
Presiding Officer

ATTEST:


Mona Lisa Drexler, CMC
Municipal Borough Clerk

74
75 Ayes: Beck, Frank, Foote, Winters, Musick, Therrien, Rex, Hopkins
76 Noes: Bartos

CHENA TO
FT. WINNIPIGHT
PHASE 3

3-MILE GATE TO
HWY. 9
PHASE 2

HWY. 9 TO
MOOSE CREEK
PHASE 1


ALASKA RAILROAD CORPORATION
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER
4,120 THIRD AVENUE, SUITE 200, FAIRBANKS, ALASKA 99701-7000

**FAIRBANKS TO NORTH POLE
RAILROAD REALIGNMENT**

PROJECT PHASING

DESIGNED BY: GSK/MSD SCALE: AS SHOWN
DRAWN BY: GSK/MSD DATE: 1 APRIL 30, 2007
CHECKED BY: GSK/MSD
APPROVED BY: GSK/MSD

1" = 1 MILE
1" = 1 MILE
1" = 1 MILE

 ALASKA RAILROAD CORPORATION OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER 615 EAST THIRD, ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99501-7000 (907) 261-7200	
FARRBANKS TO NORTH POLE RAILROAD REALIGNMENT	
PROJECT PHASING	
DRAWING TITLE/ISSUANCE DRAWN BY: [redacted] CHECKED BY: [redacted] APPROVED BY: [redacted]	SCALE & DATE SCALE: AS SHOWN DATE: APRIL 30, 2007
SHEET NO. OF [redacted]	SHEET NO. OF 1

1 By: Hank Bartos
2 Introduced: 06/20/07
3 Amended: 06/20/07
4 Adopted: 06/20/07
5
6

7 FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH

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9 RESOLUTION NO. 2007 - 26
10

11 A RESOLUTION BY THE FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH SUPPORTING THE
12 ALASKA RAILROAD SOUTHERN BY-PASS REALIGNMENT TO REMOVE RAIL
13 CROSSINGS IN THE FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH
14
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16 WHEREAS, in 2001 the Fairbanks North Star Borough adopted Resolution
17 No. 2001-36 in support of improving the Alaska Railroad route; and
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19 WHEREAS, there are over 450 school bus stops each school day at
20 railroad crossings, and those crossings put those 4,500 school bus riders at risk from
21 train traffic or from rear end collisions due to inattentive drivers and icy roads; and
22

23 WHEREAS, although current upgrades to crossings along the Richardson
24 Highway to include pull offs for school buses and fuel tankers are being constructed, the
25 Southern By-Pass realignment would eliminate the safety hazards along this part of the
26 highway altogether, particularly in inclement weather and ice fog; and
27

28 WHEREAS, the Southern By-Pass relocates rail traffic to the outskirts of
29 the city and bypasses residential areas, sharp curves and numerous crossings and
30 would reduce rail transit time for freight and passengers; and
31

32 WHEREAS, the Southern By-Pass would reduce rail maintenance costs,
33 encroachments, noise impacts from whistles at crossings and provide a more
34 economical operation for the railroad; and
35

36 WHEREAS, the Southern By-Pass offers the future opportunity to relocate
37 the downtown rail yards to undeveloped lands in south Fairbanks allowing
38 redevelopment of city center land more compatible with urban growth plans and
39 community land uses; and
40

41 WHEREAS, the Southern By-Pass of the railroad to the outskirts of the
42 city would remove the movement of hazardous materials from city residential and
43 business areas and Fort Wainwright; and
44

45 WHEREAS, the Southern By-Pass of the railroad would help improve the
46 air quality of the borough by reducing idling time for vehicles waiting at those 48 at-
47 grade crossings; and

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49 WHEREAS, the Southern By-Pass of the railroad will better accommodate
50 the proposed extension of the railroad to Delta and eventually to Canada; and

51
52 WHEREAS, the Southern By-Pass to the existing airport spur is
53 approximately four miles shorter than the railroad's proposed Trainer Gate route to the
54 north of Fort Wainwright; and

55
56 WHEREAS, the Southern By-Pass can serve the Fort Wainwright Stryker
57 Brigade by a quarter mile spur eliminating multiple fuel tanker trains from having to
58 travel an extra four miles through the city and army base; and

59
60 WHEREAS, the Southern By-Pass would improve the security and safety
61 of Fort Wainwright by removing all rail crossings from the base with the exception of
62 coal deliveries; and

63
64 WHEREAS, the Southern By-Pass would eliminate all existing and
65 proposed upstream railroad possible impacts on the Chena River thus eliminating all
66 risk of contamination to our water supply and proposed hatchery from railroad spills.

67
68 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Assembly of the
69 Fairbanks North Star Borough fully supports the Alaska Railroad's Southern By-Pass as
70 the preferred priority in improving the safety, economy and efficiency of the railroad
71 designed for our community's future.

72
73 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Fairbanks North Star Borough
74 Assembly requests military, Federal and State approval and funding for this most vital
75 rail realignment to remove 48 of the 49 railroad crossings in the Fairbanks North Star
76 Borough.


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78 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution shall be sent to
79 the Governor Sarah Palin, the Honorable Senator Ted Stevens, the Honorable Lisa
80 Murkowski, the Honorable Congressman Don Young, Secretary of the Army, Lieutenant
81 Colonel Ronald M. Johnson, Post Commander, Fort Wainwright Army Post, the Alaska
82 Interior Delegation, the Alaska Railroad Board of Directors, the Federal Railroad
83 Administration, Mayor Steve Thompson, City of Fairbanks, Mayor Doug Isaacson, City
84 of North Pole, Dr. Anne Shortt, Superintendent, Fairbanks North Star Borough School
85 District, the Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce and the Fairbanks Daily News
86 Miner.

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PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 20th DAY OF JUNE 2007.


Luke Hopkins
Presiding Officer

ATTEST:


Mona Lisa Drexler, CMC
Municipal Borough Clerk

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90 Ayes: Bartos, Beck, Frank, Foote, Winters, Musick, Rex, Hopkins

91 Noes: Therrien

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING #1
FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH
ALASKA RAILROAD CORPORATION**

25 June 2007

THE PURPOSE OF THIS MOU

Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) and Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) desire to optimize the alignment of the Alaska Railroad within the Fairbanks-North Pole area to improve safety, customer response, and minimize transportation conflicts within the adjacent communities. ARRC and FNSB agree to commence defining a new rail corridor from the west side of Fairbanks near Sheep Creek to the east side of North Pole near Moose Creek. This effort is hereby named the Fairbanks – North Pole Rail Realignment (F-NPR). Additionally, ARRC and FNSB will pursue a study to determine possible passenger transit services for the communities along the route.

OVERVIEW

Several major engineering studies have thoroughly investigated alternatives for rail realignment through the Fairbanks-North Pole area. One such segment, commonly known as the Ft. Wainwright Bypass, has been approved to provide Independent Utility and is proceeding with Department of Defense funding. It should be considered an interim route around Ft. Wainwright until such time as the F-NPR is completed.

The overall size and cost of the F-NPR is considerable and will almost certainly require that engineering, funding and construction be accomplished in phases, although these phases would be worked as simultaneously as possible. In recognition of the need for project clarity and considering that “phases” were used in previous studies over years past, a re-naming of proposed F-NPR segments is in order. The Richardson Highway Mile Post 9-North Pole project is clearly the least complex from both a financial and engineering point of view, and shall be called **Phase 1**. The safety benefits resulting from the Richardson Highway Mile Post 9 to North Pole phase are very substantial. Public transit is a distinct possibility for Phase 1. The NEPA process for Phase 1 can be accomplished expediently by relying on the engineering effort and environmental studies conducted to date. Securing independent utility in order to set the scope of study for NEPA looks to be a possible strategy for proceeding with Phase 1 and if determined to be viable will be supported by the FNSB.

ARRC will continue the alternative analysis engineering study for the area from Richardson Highway Mile Post 3 to Richardson Highway Mile Post 9 (**Phase 2**) and for the remaining realignment segment west of Phase 2 past the Chena River (**Phase 3**). Phase 1 should be first priority among the three phases.

Phase 1 Considerations

The existing Tanana River Levee provides a feasible realignment corridor for the railroad that the partners believe would improve safety, minimize traffic conflicts and optimize freight/transit through the area. The Tanana River Levee was constructed by the US Army Corps of Engineers (COE) and is now the responsibility of the FNSB. As part of Phase 1 the FNSB and the ARRC will develop a no-fee “exclusive use easement” right of way and work cooperatively with permitting authorities to ensure use of the area on or near the levee as a rail corridor through a right-of-way agreement. Maintaining

the structural integrity of the rail/levee combination is essential, is in the vital interest of all parties, and must not be compromised. The addition of a railroad on or near the levee could also be used to improve the structural integrity of the levee. As the railroad is realigned to the levee, with the approval of the COE where necessary, the ARRC could assume the FNSB's responsibility for maintenance of the levee in accordance with the COE agreements.

Once the railroad and engineering design for the levee commences, the ARRC and FNSB will seek public input and identify opportunities to enhance recreational trails. The FNSB has a designated recreational trail in the levee area that is largely undeveloped and its upgrade could be an integral part of the project. ARRC would provide access to the river-side of the levee where appropriate. ARRC and FNSB will cooperate to mitigate personal and vehicle access issues arising from the new railroad location. Access is expected to be approved for certain designated locations and will generally coincide with section lines and/or major roadway alignments. FNSB will support ARRC efforts to obtain required Federal approvals, such as "4(f)", which addresses impacts to recreational trails.

Any railroad right-of-way to be completely vacated by F-NPR will trigger statutory evaluation for possible reversion, beginning with North Pole in Phase 1.

Phase 2 and Phase 3 Considerations

As the ARRC progresses on the design and construction of Phase 1, efforts will turn to the west. The FNSB and the ARRC will aggressively pursue funding for planning and design of Phases 2 and 3 of the F-NPR.

This MOU demonstrates that the long term goal of both parties is to move rail traffic out of the core of the community and relocate it south of town. The parties acknowledge that while a "no build" option will be considered under every phase, one purpose of this MOU is to articulate the parties' agreement that routes south of Fairbanks are preferred solutions over increasing speeds or elevating rail traffic through the Trainor Gate - New Steese - Old Steese areas of town.

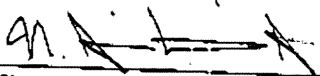
As each phase of railroad relocation develops, the ARRC and the FNSB can draw up further MOU's or right of way agreements as necessary to lock-in specific details for the subsequent project phases.

For the
ALASKA RAILROAD CORPORATION



Patrick K. Gamble
President & Chief Executive Officer

For the
FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH



Jim Whitaker
Mayor